War of 1812

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AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

CITIZENS OF NORFOLK COUNTY,

EXPOSING THE

ABSURDITY OF THE PRESENT WAR

AND THE

GREAT BENEFITS OF PEACE;

AND SHOWING

THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF CHOOSING

A

REPRESENTATIVE TO CONGRESS

WHO WILL VOTE FOR A

SPEEDY AND HONOURABLE PEACE.

BY A REPUBLICAN OF NORFOLK, AND A FRIEND TO PEACE, LIBERTY, AND COMMERCE.

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ADDRESS.

"*Mr. Seaver, by his long experience, will immedi-*
"*ately enter upon the business of his station, and lend*
"all his aid *to prosecute the* war *with energy.*"

THIS is the recommendation of Mr. Seaver, in a late pamphlet, published by a pretended republican, in order to induce the citizens of this respectable county to continue their suffrages in favour of a man who has already represented them for a *greater* number of years, than the *true* republican doctrine of rotation in office would warrant.

This recommendation of him we admit to be correct. There is no doubt that a man, who had so little regard to the interests and feelings of the republicans of this great commercial State, as to vote for a dreadful war, for which we were wholly unprepared, will, in order to be consistent, "lend *all his aid*" (however small that may be) to prosecute his *own war* with energy.

If the friends of Mr. Seaver had contented themselves with simply holding him up as the zealous advocate for a disastrous war, we, the republican advocates for peace, would have been silent. We would have trusted to the good sense of the people of this County; to their well known love of peace; to their conviction of the haste and imprudence with which the war was undertaken, for arguments against his re-election. We in fact did pursue towards him, a manly, republican, and generous policy. Without attacking his personal or political character, we confined ourselves to a simple publication of the several votes which our representative, Mr. Seaver, had given for several years past. We relied on the excellence of that scripture rule: "By their fruits you shall know them."

By this exhibition of Mr. Seaver's conduct in Congress, it was apparent, that not in a single, solitary measure, but throughout his *whole public life*, he has been often in opposition to *all the republicans of the North;* that esteeming of little account that commerce, and those sacred rights, on which his own constituents depend for their very existence, he has promoted and supported measures destructive of our prosperity.

The whole system of commercial restrictions down to the premature declaration of war, which was the most dreadful consummation of them, which was the death blow to the commerce of Massachusetts, has met his eager and unqualified assent.

Still however we were not disposed to widen the breach in the republican party, to which we are firmly attached, nor should we at this time enter into the arguments against Mr. Seaver's reelection, if we had not been traduced, and our measures and motives misrepresented.

In the pamphlet of a pretended republican who supports Mr. Seaver, merely because he is a *friend to the war*, you are told, that the peace party among the republicans are the mere tools of federalists; that the federalists first suggested the idea of a change; and that this is a base coalition between the peace party and the federalists for ambitious purposes.

After saying that this is absolutely false, and a gross and base attempt to excite your passions against your republican friends, I would ask to what point does this doctrine lead? What? cannot the republicans, once in eight or ten years, change their candidate without being abused as apostates and betrayers of their party? Is it to be presumed that our representative in Congress can *never* do wrong? And are we bound to support him, when he opposes our view of the publick interests, or else to be branded as apostates, or federalists? Is there no other republican in the County of Norfolk capable of representing and supporting its interests but Mr. Seaver; and is a man to be expelled from the society of republicans, because he thinks that another

republican may be as good a man as our existing member ? If these doctrines are true (and they are the doctrines of Mr. Seaver's friends) we may as well alter the constitution at once, and make Mr. Seaver *a peer* for life. It is of little moment to a republican whether a man be called "Lord Seaver" and enjoy an hereditary dignity, or whether he be called plain Mr. Seaver, and still enjoy the same exclusive privileges. For what let me again ask, does this argument amount to, short of this, if when the republicans propose a change of one republican for another, they are to be told that they are apostates, they are federalists in disguise ?

Not contented with thus misrepresenting the views of the friends of peace, they also grossly misrepresent the *facts*. They underrate the *number* of republicans who nominated a Friend to Peace. They state, that all the members of the peace party who nominated Mr. Ruggles were federalists. This is wholly false ; not a federalist was present. They state, that we gave undoubted proofs of our determination to oppose the election of *any republican* candidate. What shameful effrontery and wickedness ! ! We *oppose* any republican candidate when we nominate a decided republican ! ! Is not Mr. Ruggles as decided a republican as Mr. Seaver ? He is not, to be sure, a friend *to war*, but he is a friend to peace ; and does republicanism mean a *desire for war ?* If it does, the County of Norfolk has never been republican ; for no County in the State has so uniformly, under all administrations, testified its desire, its ardour, its love for peace.

But it is objected to Mr. Ruggles, that he was *first* nominated in a federal paper. And are the machinations and measures of our political opponents thus to deprive us of the man whom we would prefer ? How easy in such a case would it be for Mr. Seaver, or any other man, less versed than he is in politicks, to destroy a rival by sending a nomination to a federal paper.

All this is done, republicans, with the mean view and intention of exciting your jealousies against Mr. Ruggles. But have you not spirit and sense enough

to judge for yourselves? Are your opinions of men and measures so poorly and imperfectly formed, that you are to be driven from them, whether right or wrong, merely because your political opponents are said to favour them? The worst enemies of republican governments never uttered such a slander against them.

The question of *war* or *peace* is a *simple one*. There is no republican so weak; there is no republican so ignorant, as to be incapable of deciding on this plain question. If he thinks the war unnecessary; if he thinks it premature; if he thinks that it will not remedy our evils; if he thinks it will impoverish the farmer, ruin the merchant, saddle the nation with taxes, convert a peaceful country into a vast, unprofitable, expensive camp; is he to be diverted or changed from these opinions, merely because the *federalists* think so too? Do right and wrong, truth and falsehood, depend altogether on men's political divisions?

To what a dreadful issue and result does this doctrine lead us? Are we then *never* to be *united*? Are we to be subject to ten thousand perpetual feuds and divisions?

Oh no! say the friends of war; Oh no! says Mr. Seaver, we ought to be *united* in *favour* of the *war*.

Well then, let us see how this argument ends! If all the *federalists* should unite in favour of the war, according to the argument of this pretended republican advocate for Mr. Seaver, the republicans ought to be *against* it. What! Mr. Seaver against his *own war?* No such thing. He would then tell you that the *whole nation* were *united* in favour of *his measures*. But the case happens to be reversed. One half the republicans and nearly all the federalists are *opposed to the war*. What then is Mr. Seaver's language? Why you ought to be in *favour* of war, because the federalists are *against* it. So then union is an excellent and honourable thing if it is in *favour* of *Seaver and war;* but the *same union* is a most dreadful monster when it is opposed to Mr. Seaver's votes, to blood, to carnage, to taxes, to national disgrace and ruin.

Now I ask you, my republican brethren, whether this is not a fair view of this argument against Mr. Ruggles?

And let me appeal to your good sense, whether the merit or demerit of the war ought not to be decided *without any regard* to the opinions of *federalists*, and whether we ought to admit ourselves to be such weather-cocks as to place ourselves, right or wrong, on the most important and vital questions, in opposition to what the federalists may *happen* to think? If we do adopt such conduct, there is an end to argument, and to all hopes of future union or peace in our country.

We do not mean now to enter into the justice or expediency of the war. It is too broad a ground, and the people have decided upon it. They have, we say with evidence, decided *against the war*. To be sure, like citizens, they submit, but they rely upon their constitutional remedies, the elections. These remedies are applying as fast as the opportunity presents. Never was there a case in a free country in which publick opinion was so *clearly* expressed. Shall a few republicans oppose themselves to the whole national opinion, in complaisance to Mr. Seaver? *We will not.*

This is not a party question. It is a national one. It is a vital one. Men *ought not* to be, men *cannot* be, men *never will* be, bound down to little party divisions, when their lives and fortunes, their farms, their wives, and children, are in jeopardy.

This is not the *first* time that a *rash war spirit* has broken up all party distinctions, and *united* all the republicans and reasonable federalists in an universal clamour for peace.

Mr. Seaver's pamphlet in favour of war has made some most unfortunate and imprudent allusions on this point. In order to convict the federalists of inconsistency, he has reminded them of their rash zeal *for war* under President Adams's reign of terror. Be it so. Be it, that the federalists are inconsistent; we agree to it if they please. But how stands the argument as it respects *us republicans?*

We were *then opposed* to war with France, though much more popular, and much more just, and much less dangerous than this *present war*. We are also opposed to the present war, for the same reasons as we were then; for the reasons urged and long since imprinted on our minds by Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison, "that we are a young country, remote from the collisions of Europe, and we ought to husband our resources until we arrive at such strength and power as will enable us to compel the European nations to respect us."

We are therefore consistent. The County of Norfolk addressed Congress against the war with France, in 1798. The County of Norfolk ought to be equally opposed to *this* war, which is vastly more ruinous?

But how stands Mr. Seaver's consistency? He was opposed to the French war in Mr. Adams's time. He is the strenuous advocate for war *now*. He opposed *then*, all the measures which government adopted to support the national honour. He opposed the standing army. He opposed the cession of Castle Island, and all other measures adopted by Mr. Adams, in that war. Now indeed, *we* republicans are abused because *we* act in perfect coincidence with our *former* opinions, and oppose a war as we did *then*. To us it is immaterial whether Gen. Washington, (as was the case in 1798) or Gen. Dearborn, (as is the case now) be at the head of our armies. We are opposed to all standing armies, and to all foreign conquests of beggarly and miserable provinces, such as the two Canadas.

We have said that we do not mean to enter into the justice or expediency of the war; but we must say, that the advocates for war have made many gross misrepresentations.

We are not disposed to palliate the wrongs of Great Britain; but the existence of those wrongs, and the dreadful nature of the remedy adopted to redress them, are distinct questions.

They are questions on which republicans may differ; on which they *have differed*. Many wiser and

abler republicans than Mr. Seaver, from every part of the union, opposed the war in Congress. In the Senate, there are but seven federalists; and yet, out of 34 members, there was only a majority of *six* in favour of the war.

Now, if republicans are not allowed to think and agree with *federalists* on this subject, I know no law that prevents them from thinking with other *republicans.*

I do not know why they should not agree with Mr. Pope and Mr. Bradley, two distinguished *republican senators*, or with Mr. Tallman, a *republican* representative from this State, as well as Mr. Seaver; unless, indeed, it is established law, that constituents are not only bound by the *laws*, but by the *opinions* of their own immediate representative. I think in that case their servitude is not the most honourable, nor the most safe.

Is it understood, fellow republicans, that when we choose a representative we mean to adopt all his opinions, whether right or wrong, beneficial or ruinous? If such be the understanding, we ought to be a little more careful hereafter in our *choice of the man.*

We have said, that the people have expressed a *decided opinion* against the war; we have said they never, on any occasion, expressed so decided an one.

We proceed to the proofs. In the first place, the loan opened by government was not *half filled*; money is most abundant; deprived of their trade on the ocean, the merchants are compelled to keep their money inactive on hand. Why not loan it to government? Because they *disapproved the war.* But we are told this is a *federal scheme!* This is too weak. What! did the federalists prevent the republicans from loaning? or will the republicans countenance the boastings of federalists, by saying, that *the money* is held wholly by federalists?

It is not true; the republicans of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Virginia, and Charleston are richer than the federalists, and yet they would not loan. Why? Because they disapproved of the war.

Secondly. The President was authorised to accept of 50,000 volunteers, and to raise 20,000 regulars besides, the whole cost of whom would, if called into service, be twenty eight millions of dollars in one year, which would double the whole national debt in two years, and would be 56 times as great as the whole state debt of this great commonwealth.

But he has not raised, nor could he raise more than 5000 men as a standing army, nor have more than that number of volunteers offered in all the United States. Not one seventh part of the force has been raised.

Why has this happened? Can this also be charged to the federalists? If they *hold the money*, they surely do not hold the men. The republicans constitute three-fourths of all the population of the United States, and yet the republicans will neither enlist or volunteer. Why? Because they dislike the WAR.

Again: the State of Maryland is decidedly republican, the State of North Carolina is decidedly republican; yet these two great States without changing their republican character have come out in unequivocal opposition to the war. I am then authorized in stating, that the republicans are as much or more opposed to the war than the federalists. Shall we then be told, that we cannot adopt opinions on this subject without being charged with apostacy? We are not to be deterred by threats of this sort, until there is a law enforced by military power, making Mr. Seaver's anti-commercial, anti-New-England votes, the standard of every man's opinions.

It is admitted by Mr. Seaver's friend, the author of the pamphlet circulated to cause the re-election of this war gentleman, that there were but two causes of war;

IMPRESSMENTS, AND
THE ORDERS IN COUNCIL.

We say nothing about the gross exaggerations in putting down 6000, the whole number impressed for 20 years, when government admitted in the same paper, that all but 900 had been restored. We say nothing about our personal experience of the few *native* seamen who

are impressed, nor do we ask the inhabitants of this large county to see if it has been to their *knowledge*, and in their vicinity, so dreadful an evil, as to justify sending 20,000 seamen into foreign prison ships, and 20,000 more into foreign service, which the war will do; we simply say that unjust as this practice of Great Britain may be, Mr. Monroe, a staunch republican, and our present Secretary of State, did write our government, when he was in England, that he *could make a satisfactory* settlement of that business with Great Britain, and the only reason it has not been done is, that we had other matters to settle, all of which are now adjusted.

The other point in dispute, the Orders in Council are now repealed. This is admitted by every body, even by Mr. Seaver's pamphlet. We have then no dispute whatever with Great Britain, and what we are now fighting for no man can tell, unless it be to punish her for her past conduct, or to make her *put on* the Orders in Council *again*.

But says this pamphlet of Mr. Seaver's friends, Great Britain is *waging war* upon your *coasts and frontiers*— She lets loose the savages upon you, will you not *defend* yourselves?

My republican friends; does Mr. Seaver take you to be fools? Who declared the war? Mr. Seaver. Who entered Canada? Gen. Hull. Who invited the Canadians to revolt against Great Britain? Gen. Hull. Who threatened to look down all opposition to the conquest of Canada? Gen. Hull. Who asked an armistice, or cessation of arms? Gov. Provost and admiral Sawyer, British officers. Who rejected this offer? Mr. Madison. Who attacked the Guerriere? Capt. Hull. What coast have the British fleets attacked? None. Who now threatens to take Quebec? Gen. Dearborn.

Now can any man's cause be so bad as to make it necessary after all this, to say, that as Great Britain is *attacking us* by sea and land, it would be base not to continue the war. Yet Mr. Seaver's friend says all this.

Need I add to this, that the British government have even yet, after blood has been spilt, sent out another ambassador, admiral Warren, to sue for peace.

Perhaps upon your votes may depend the question, whether peace shall or shall not be made—for if Mr. Seaver goes to Congress, he tells you plainly, that he shall prosecute the war with vigour.

To conclude, and to sum up the whole matter in a few words which every man can comprehend.

The question is simply this,

Will you vote for a *republican*, *Mr. Ruggles*, who is a friend to peace, or for another republican, Mr. Seaver, whose friend says, he will prosecute the *war with vigour?* Will you vote for a friend to trade and commerce, upon which agriculture depends for its best rewards, or for a man, who has always voted more than *any other man* against trade and commerce?

If you think the possession of the two Canadas, the most bleak, barren, cold, inhospitable poor countries in America, gained at the expence of five or six such armies as Gen. Hull's, and with a national debt which will amount to a heavy mortgage on your farms, the ready, natural, and proper means of vindicating your rights, which Britain has *already ceased* to violate, why you will vote for Mr. Seaver.

He prefers the conquest of *Canada* and high taxes to free trade, cheap foreign goods, and dear country produce.

Mr. Ruggles prefers unshackled commerce, and individual prosperity in town and country.

Mr. Seaver will vote for standing armies, paper money, (indeed I presume he has already voted for one sort of paper exchequer bills) land taxes, and excises.

Mr. Ruggles will pursue a course of measures which will render all these unnecessary.

Those of you therefore who are too passionate to reason, too deaf to the dictates of humanity, too insensible to the injunctions of christianity to wish a speedy and honourable peace, will vote for Seaver. But the calm, sober, steady peacemakers will join us their republican brethren in voting for

NATHANIEL RUGGLES, Esq.

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